



The South India CHURCHMAN

The magazine of the Church of South India

July 1998



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**THOUGHT FOR THE
MONTH
JULY 1998**

We have no such proof that Caesar died in the Capital as we possess that Christ suffered in the manner revealed in the Gospels. (Dr. Samuel Johnson).

Before Christ sent the Church into the world, He sent the Spirit into the Church. The same order must be observed today. (John R.W. Stott)

When I was asked to write about a Missionary I knew, a few people crossed my mind, such as Mother Teresa. Then I stopped and thought, "I cannot write about one of these great people because I don't really know them. It's true I've heard their names and read and been told about them, but I don't know what they're like".

The person I think is a missionary, and a good one, is my mother. This may sound peculiar but surely you don't have to be ordained to be a missionary. My mum's mission is to be a housewife and a mother to me and my family. My mum has never been selfish and put herself first before her family. I have never been starved or been without her endless love. Just like the famous missionaries my mother has needed a lot of courage. She could easily have gone off to bingo and left me, but she didn't. She made the supreme sacrifice of thinking about me before herself. I am very lucky to have a missionary mother. (An essay by a twelve year old girl)

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**THE SOUTH INDIA
CHURCHMAN**

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JULY 1998

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CONTENTS

A View from the Pew	1
The Lambeth Story	3
Message from Moderator-in-Charge	6
Trichy-Thanjavur Bishop Installed	8
For such a time - A Bible Study	10
Pokhran Explosion - A View	13

CELEBRATE AND EMULATE

Do you remember Bartholomaeus Ziegenbalg? Have you heard of him? He arrived in Tranquebar on the East Coast of India on July 9, 1706. He was commissioned by King Frederick of Denmark to be a missionary to Tranquebar which was a Danish colony since 1620. When he offered himself for missionary service he was only 24 and he died at the age of 37 and lies buried in the New Jerusalem Church, Tranquebar which he himself had built in 1717.

These days going abroad is safe and easy and a mark of status and prestige. People like to be called foreign returned. But in those days any overseas journey was fraught with risk, danger and uncertainty. After all we will do well to remember that as recently as 1912, the TITANIC hailed as the biggest and the unsinkable ship in maritime history, sank on April 12, 1912 plunging more than 1500 people to their watery grave. St. Paul speaks of shipwrecks and cyclones in his missionary journey. Yet he defied all that he may go and proclaim the Gospel of Christ to the gentiles.

Ziegenbalg braved the risks in the 18th century and came to India and his 11 years of glorious and remarkable Ministry bore fruit with the emergence of a Protestant Church on the coast and ever since this has grown and flourished. We would also do well to remember that in those days medical science was not far advanced and people were at the mercy of epidemics and pestilences. Many amenities and basic requirements such as clean food and drinking water were unheard of in those days and yet our forefathers toiled amidst

such inhospitable climate the fruits of which we now enjoy. Many Protestant Churches celebrate the festival of Mission in the month of July to commemorate the arrival of this great missionary in July 1706.

There are a few more things about Ziegenbalg which we had better know. He was a linguist and a lover of India. He loved the local language and was well informed about the local people and their customs. He adapted himself to different people and situations, founded a strong indigenous church in India, trained people, opened schools and the first Protestant Seminary in 1716, started a printing press, a paper mill and a magazine. He was an Ecumenist far ahead of his times

A View from the Pew

who bridged cultures, worked with Tamils, Germans, Danes, Dutch, Portugese and the British. He was a lexicographer and a grammarian, an innovative liturgist. He skillfully translated the Bible and produced the first full New Testament in Tamil in 1711. An indefatigable worker, he organised and participated in 54 conferences. He was a great communicator who used his talents and skills in writing to foster genuine friendship with common people. He courageously took risks for the sake of the Gospel. When he arrived in India he was resisted by the Danes. He interceded for people advocating justice and self worth as a result of which he was imprisoned for four months, faced criticism, distrust and non-cooperation. Though physically, mentally and spiritually broken he persevered

patiently till the end with deep faith and courage.

These are things that we should celebrate in any person but as we celebrate we will also do well to emulate these traits in our own lives, which means we too must become more open-minded, tolerant, receptive to criticism and dissent, courageous and risk-taking, inclined to promote cross-cultural communication, humanhood and harmony, possessed of indomitable courage ready to persevere till the end! Do we have it in us? Shouldn't we?

An event of great significance which happens once in ten years has started at Lambeth on July 18, 1998 and it will go on till August 9. Almost all the bishops of the Anglican churches all over the world and the churches in communion with the Anglican Church are assembling at Lambeth. When it was inaugurated in 1867, there were 76 bishops which has now grown to over 700. Though it is only a Conference and not a Council, its influence has acquired at times "so close to authority as hardly to be distinguishable from it", according to Cambridge University historian Owen Chadwick. The 1998 Lambeth Conference, we hope, will face the challenge of enabling the world church to face future key issues that will see its development into the next millennium. ❖

A word from your General Secretary

It gives me great joy to inform the faith community in CSI that all bishops and their spouses of Church of South India, except North Kerala (vacant) have gone to England to participate in the 800 strong Episcopal Community in the Lambeth Conference. Every 10 years the bishops of the Anglican Communion attend a Lambeth Conference, an event unrivalled in the Anglican experience. The first Conference of Lambeth met in 1867 attended by 76 Bishops. It is surprising to note that the vast majority of the bishops in Anglican Communion today are neither English nor is English their first language. In spite of the enormous growth of the respective churches, each in its own way, yet they find roots in 16th Century in England and thereby

in the early Church. Their worship evolved from the English Book of Common Prayer. Their music began with traditional christian hymns and chants. Their spirituality reflects the centuries of devotion.

The conference was named after the Archbishop's (of Canterbury) London Residence, Lambeth palace, on the South side of the Thames at Lambeth Bridge where Bishops met when there were only a few Bishops. They moved to Canterbury in 1978, which Cathedral contains the Archbishop's official seat. Lambeth is a conference, not a Council, with power only to consult, discuss, debate and vote on resolutions.

The 103rd Archbishop the Most Rev. and Rt. Honourable George L.

Carey who is in Apostolic succession to the first Archbishop of Canterbury Church in London in 597 AD; and the Rev. Canon John L. Peterson, the Secretary General of the Anglican Communion plays a very crucial role in this Conference. The Church of South India, a part of which traces back its roots in the Anglican Church, now as a uniting church will pray for the conference for all the participating Bishops and for the two above said officers in particular. We further pray that this unique conference may hear the agonies of those who are abused, beleaguere in and around the world church because of racism, casteism etc., and that all the participating bishops may work for a common purpose for Mission and Ministry throughout the world.

Rev. G. Dyvasirvadam

NEW FACES

Sr. Thankamma Varkey, with 28 years of rich experience in the Women's Fellowship behind her has taken over as its new General Secretary.

She took her L.Th from the Serampore College, B.D. from the Marthoma Theological Seminary and STM from the Lancaster

Theological Seminary, PA, USA. She is specially trained in Christian education and Counselling.

She joined the Church of



South India Women's Order in 1973 and even before

that was Secretary of the Women's Fellowship of the Madhya Kerala Diocese. She has travelled extensively throughout South India.

She hopes to give a new vigour and vitality for the Women's Fellowship.

The Gospel was not good advice but good news.

- William Ralph Inge

THE LAMBETH STORY

130 years ago Archbishop Longley, Archbishop of Canterbury, called together all the bishops of the Anglican Communion for consultation. Ever since then bishops have met either at Lambeth or Canterbury every ten years to share in their common mission.

It has become essential for bishops to meet for the following reasons:

Bishops need to study together.

The conference will provide the bishops with a major opportunity to engage in their task of guarding and interpreting the Faith as they approach the third millennium of Christianity.

Bishops need to share with each other.

The Anglican Communion has grown; there are now 36 Provinces with some 750 bishops. Much of this growth has occurred where there is terrible human suffering, poverty and persecution.

Meeting together will help to strengthen the theological, spiritual and personal bonds of that Communion and to support each other and share in one another's sufferings.

Bishops need to pray together.

The Conference will be one of study, worship and fellowship through which leaders are resourced by God for their work in resourcing others.

Effective leadership depends upon vision, faith and commitment. Lambeth '98 will help to focus the minds and hearts of all bishops as the Anglican Communion prepares for the challenges and opportunities of the new century.

The Archbishop of Canterbury

Increasingly the role of the

Archbishop of Canterbury, as one of our "instruments of unity", is becoming more visible and important

to our world family. His pastoral visits around the Communion point to how the Anglican family is the living icon of what a universal Communion of Churches can be.

The 103rd Archbishop, the Most Revd and Rt Hon George L. Carey, is in apostolic succession to the first Archbishop of Canterbury, St. Augustine, who established the Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church in England in 597 AD. One of the most well-known successors of St. Augustine is St. Thomas Becket who was martyred in Canterbury Cathedral on December 29, 1170, by four knights of King Henry II. His death made Canterbury a sacred site for pilgrims from that day forward. Other notable archbishops have included Thomas Cranmer, William Laud, William Temple and Michael Ramsey.

Archbishop Carey's responsibility includes the bishopric of the Diocese of Canterbury in England and Archbishop of the Province of Canterbury which includes the Dioceses of Central and Southern England and the Diocese of Europe. He is Primate of All England and a member of England's House of Lords. He has authority over other dioceses around the world which are not in established provinces.



Archbishop Carey is married to Eileen and they have four grown children. His personal interests are wide and varied, from walking to supporting a favourite football club. A people person, Archbishop Carey finds meeting people around the Communion to be most invigorating.

The Lambeth Story

Every ten years the bishops of the Anglican Communion attend a Lambeth Conference.

The bishops, overseers of churches, as the early church called them, are brought together by the Archbishop of Canterbury, with the encouragement of his fellow Church leaders. He is the focal point of the Lambeth Conference which, in turn, is defined by the bishops who attend.

The unique event has increased in strength with every improvement in transportation and communication since the first conference was held in 1867. There were 76 bishops at this first Lambeth Conference; over 700 bishops will be coming to the 1998 conference, up from approximately 500 in 1988. In 1988 there were also 28 observers from other Churches in Communion with the See of Canterbury and 37 special consultants and speakers.

When the Archbishop of Canterbury first invited Anglican bishops to Lambeth Palace in 1867 he was following a practice of the early church; apostles and those bishops they had consecrated, who in turn consecrated others in what is called apostolic succession. These early bishops always gathered to resolve their differences. Unlike

an early church council, though, the Lambeth Conference is not a legislative body; its resolutions are not binding within the Anglican Communion. Bishops, however, carry Lambeth reports back to clergy and laity in their own autonomous provinces where they carry much weight because Lambeth Conferences have acquired an influence at times "so close to authority as hardly to be distinguishable from it."

The steamship and airplane, the telegraph and telephone, the computer and electronic telecommunications have reinforced its strength by enabling bishops all over the world to visit England without deserting their own responsibilities at home.

The Conference was named after the Archbishop of Canterbury's London residence, Lambeth Palace, on the south side of the Thames at Lambeth Bridge where bishops met until their sheer number dictated a change. They moved, in 1978, to Canterbury, whose cathedral contains his official seat.

The Anglican Communion defines itself as churches in communion with the See of Canterbury, sharing the tradition of a Book of Common Prayer, with clergy made up of bishops, priests and deacons as well as the ministry of the laity. One of these, the Anglican Church of Canada, requested the first Lambeth Conference, which was held in 1867.

The See of Canterbury could never have ruled this worldwide Communion because The Church of England is governed by English law and tradition. The Archbishop of Canterbury does not even govern York within

England. In fact the Archbishop of York and the Bishop of Durham refused to attend the first Lambeth Conference in 1867. Nor could the Archbishop of Canterbury call Lambeth a 'council' because the Church of England may not gather councils 'without the commandment and will of Princes', according to the Thirty-Nine Articles on which the Church of England was founded. So Lambeth is a conference, not a council, with power only to confer, consult, discuss, debate and vote on resolutions.

Many doubted such a conference would be worth attending and did not believe 76 bishops could debate successfully but the first, four-day conference quickly dispelled those doubts. Though they came from many countries these bishops shared the same roots. They were all pilgrims to St. Augustine's Chair at Canterbury and to the Cathedral where Thomas Becket was martyred. They drew inspiration, energy, and power from Canterbury and from their common prayer.

They quickly found they shared an ecumenical desire for reunion with other Christian churches who share Anglican belief in:

1. The Bible as the sufficient rule of faith
2. two creeds
3. two sacraments instituted by Christ
4. the apostolic succession

Lambeth Conferences began to witness too, in such culturally ethical matters as polygamy, divorce, and family planning. The 1958 Lambeth Conference report, *The Family in Contemporary Society*, reaffirmed

at Lambeth 1968, has continued to play a vital advocacy role around the world.

But it is the Archbishop of Canterbury around whom the Anglican Communion gathers. He is not called a "patriarch", as Orthodox Churches call their presidents, nor is he called a "pope" as the Roman Catholic Church calls its spiritual head. Instead Anglicans simply agree that he is a visible symbol of their world-wide communion.

The 1998 Lambeth Conference will face the challenge of enabling the Communion to face future key issues that will see its development into the next millennium.

The Canterbury Story

As its name implies, the Lambeth Conference first met at the Archbishop of Canterbury's London home, Lambeth Palace. But the bishops moved, in 1978, to Canterbury, whose great cathedral was the birthplace of English Christianity in 597 AD. St. Augustine, the first Archbishop of Canterbury, lived there and 102 subsequent archbishops have since occupied the St. Augustine's Chair. Augustine of Canterbury, a Benedictine prior sent to England with 40 monks, was the first Christian authority welcomed by a ruler of the Anglo-Saxon Kingdom. He baptised its king, Ethelbert.

The famous Cathedral, whose three towers seem to glow in the brightness of the Southeast England light, has been sacred to pilgrims ever since the martyrdom of Archbishop Thomas Becket. Canterbury promptly became an international pilgrimage shrine, Thomas was canonised and pilgrims flocked to

the sacred site. Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* and T.S. Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral* give it an important place in English literature.

Preparations for Lambeth 1998

Seven hundred and forty four bishops have received invitations for themselves and their spouses.

Space is reserved, as it was in 1978 and 1988, at the University of Kent in the city of Canterbury Cathedral, the mother church of the Anglican Communion. Meetings will be held in the university sports hall, which is flexible enough for large (1,200 people) or small (50 people) meetings or worship services. The large, plenary sessions will include bishops, official observers and consultants, support staff and media.

The international Lambeth Design Group, headed by Archbishop Keith Rayner of Australia, has set before the 1998 Conference four themes to stimulate discussion and study.

Called to Full Humanity:

What does it mean to be truly human, as individuals and in community? What are the forces which enhance, and which threaten, our humanity?

Called to live and proclaim the Good News:

How is the Church to ensure that the faith is faithfully handed on from generation to generation and that it is effectively interpreted in word and deed to the world?

Called to be faithful in a plural world:

Anglicans are used to living with a plurality of views within their communion. But modern cultures are often much more

radically pluralistic. What are the implications of pluralism within our own region for the life of the Church? How in that context can the Church be a sign of God's rule?

Called to be One:

What is the meaning of the unity for which Jesus prays? How do the Christian Churches achieve Christ's bond to each other in a world where economic and commercial forces bind people together and where political and cultural tensions tear them apart? Further preparations for Lambeth 1998 include a communications system with simultaneous translation capability for English, French, Japanese, Swahili, and Spanish. Appropriate commercial as well as in-house media facilities will be in place to provide live media coverage and video resources.

The Secretary General

The Revd Canon John L. Peterson is the Secretary General of the Anglican Communion.

His primary job, is to serve the Lambeth Conference and other Anglican Communion bodies. The Archbishop of Canterbury calls the Conference and invites all the bishops to attend. It is he who appointed John Peterson to be the Secretary of the Lambeth Conference.

What he likes best about his job, Canon Peterson says, is the tremendous diversity and the enthusiasm of the people in the Church to share each other's stories and to help that sharing take place.

"I believe in an inclusive church," he adds. "I believe that we are not a private club, but a communion in which there can be no distinctions made between

male and female, Jew and Greek, black and white."

Canon Peterson, fifth such officer in the Anglican Communion, took office January 1, 1995.

The Lambeth Conference is one of four instruments for Anglican unity served by the Secretary General. Another is the Anglican Consultative Council, the legislative body of the Communion. A third is the Primates Meeting through which the Anglican Communion bishops can stay in touch with each other more effectually than the decade-apart Lambeth Conferences allows.

The last - yet in fact of prime importance - instrument of unity served by the secretary General and his staff, is the Archbishop of Canterbury. In his travels, the Archbishop has become a living symbol of our growing global family. ❖

Lessons from History

One of the most solemn facts in all history - one of the most significant for anybody who cares to ponder over it - is the fact that Jesus Christ was not merely murdered by hooligans in a country road; he was condemned by everything that was most respectable in that day, everything that pretended to be most righteous - the religious leaders of the time, the authority of the Roman Government, and even the democracy itself which shouted to save Barabbas rather than Christ. (Herbert Butterfield 'History and Human Relations').

Message from the Rt. Rev. Dr. I. Jesudasan, Moderator-in-charge of the CSI Synod

I write this letter against the backdrop of the World Anglican Bishops' Conference, commonly known as the Lambeth Conference (since it is held under the Presidentship of Archbishop of Canterbury whose Palace is "Lambeth" in London) and for that reason all CSI bishops are in London. Strictly speaking CSI is not part of the Anglican Church but because the CSI has accepted "historic episcopacy" from the Anglican Church tradition and the Anglican Church has merged with denominations of other traditions (Presbyterian, British Methodist, Congregational) to form the CSI, we are in the wider Inter Communion Fellowship of the Anglican Church. The same is true of CNI, Church of Pakistan and Church of Bangladesh and so bishops of these united churches

are also invited to participate. Since the Mar Thoma Syrian Church is in full communion with the Anglican Church as well as it forms part of the CSI-CNI-Mar Thoma Joint Council, bishops of that Church too are invited to the Lambeth Conference.

It is significant to note in this connection that the **four** basic principles of Church unity namely: the Bible as the sufficient rule of faith, the two ecumenical creeds, the two sacraments instituted by Christ and the Apostolic succession (known together as Lambeth Quadrilateral) were originally formulated by the Lambeth Conference of 1968. The South India Union Negotiations Committtee that met in Tranquebar accepted these 4 principles as the basis for Church Union Negotiations and the same

is known as "Tranquebar Manifesto". Ten years ago I had the opportunity to attend the Lambeth Conference along with few other CSI bishops. Bishop Tutu and I had the privilege of joining with the Archbishop of Canterbury in celebrating the closing Holy Communion Service. It was an occasion of deep spiritual experience and ecumenical fellowship. We are indeed grateful to the Archbishop of Canterbury for inviting all our bishops and their spouses to attend this Conference. All congregations are earnestly requested to pray for this Conference so that God the Holy Spirit may guide its deliberations for strengthening the life and mission of the Church.

The theme for the 1998 Lambeth Conference is "Come Holy Spirit and kindle in us the

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fire of your love". St. Paul says in Romans 5:5 "God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us". This theme is basically a biblical theme. To stimulate discussion and study three areas of concern are identified in the context of present day world. It is found necessary to rekindle the fire of love in the life of the Church for its on-going mission and for shaping its life for the third millennium.

1. Called to full humanity :

To be truly human as individuals and in community the forces of love need to be re-kindled. There is the common tendency everywhere of struggle for power and positions and reckless pursuit for pleasures of life which push the human spirit down to sub-human levels. God's love alone can lift human life to its fullness. So we pray to God, the Holy Spirit to re-kindle the love of God in human hearts.

2. Called to live and proclaim the Good News :

This involves Christ event be handed on from generation to generation faithfully and be interpreted in word and deed effectively to the world. Religious education programmes, theological discipline, church *koinonia*, the Gospel communication methods are to be evaluated to see that God's

reconciling forces of love are really at work in these activities. Proclamation of Good News or witnessing Jesus Christ who in the source of God's redeeming love to the world, is to be done not out of religious fanaticism or expansionist motivation but out of the compulsion of God's love in our hearts and out of eagerness to enable people to be lifted up to the loving relationship to God and to have life under God's rule of love.

3. Called to be one :

What is the meaning of unity for which Jesus prayed? In the emerging world situation economic and commercial forces are seen binding people together where cultural and political tensions tear them apart. In this situation what is the meaning of Christ's bond that the Church tries to promote? We know that we are "one" in the greatness of Christ's love but divided in the littleness of our own. We are called to engage in the search for unity of the Church to be true to our calling as one body of Christ and for the sake of the world that it may know that Jesus was sent by the Father to be Saviour of the world. In I Corinthians, Chapter 13, St. Paul speaks that God's love revealed in Christ has the power to overcome cultural, theological, tradition-bound and Institutional barriers and to such maturity the Church has to grow.

4. Called to be faithful in the plural world :

Church is the sign of God's rule in a world of many cultures and religions. How can God's love in Christ change people of other faiths or no-faith? Jesus Christ is the light of the world. This light works in two ways: it enables us to see God's love acting in other religions and cultures and this recognition may deepen our experience of God's love. Light of Christ can also transform religious attitudes and cultural patterns of other peoples. Such a movement of God's spirit of love is very vital for the common life of future generations. In all these, how much we have achieved in one generation or in one century is immaterial but the crucial question is as pilgrim people of God how fast are we moving towards the fulfilment of the God's purposes revealed in Christ and which are now clear to the mind of the Church.

After the Lambeth Conference I am sure, we will be provided with more materials containing deliberations and resolutions of the Conference. Once again I appeal to you all to uphold the Lambeth Conference in your prayers as this being a very important coming together of Church leaders from all over the world at the close of this century and at the beginning of the next.

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The Moderator and other Bishops
blessing the new Bishop



The Bishop being received with
right hand of fellowship

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honouring the new Bishop



Presenting the po
Moderator



Procession of Diocesan
before the Service

TRICHY - TANJORE



Hon. Food Minister and the District Collector with the new Bishop

The Bishop's family - Mrs. Grace Srinivasan, Mr. Daniel Srinivasan, Miss. Rebecca Srinivasan

During the Consecration

The new Bishop Rt. Rev. Dr. D. James Srinivasan, trichy-Thanjavur Diocese

The new Bishop installed

HOP'S CONSECRATION

FOR JUST SUCH A TIME !

The World Council of Churches has released a book containing Bible Studies and liturgies preparatory to the Eighth Assembly at Harare, Zimbabwe in December 1998. This is one of the Bible Studies taken from "Turn to God, Rejoice in Hope" a WCC Publication, Geneva, 1996.

Esther's time. It is difficult to confront a time of crisis in isolation. "For just such a time" Esther was called to speak and to bring relief and deliverance to her people (Esther 4:14). But she did not do that alone. Esther needed the help of Mordecai and the community: "Go, gather all the Jews to be found in Susa, and hold a fast on my behalf" (v.16). She prepared herself well too: "I and my maids will also fast as you do." We can imagine that the memory of the great courage of Vashti (Esther 1:10-22) helped her to intercede for her people.

The inspiration of Esther's life invites us to pay attention to our own times. We are living in a very special time today. There are many elements that make it different and unique, but the most meaningful motif is that it is the time of our own life. It is the time God has given us as a precious gift: "For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven" (Eccl. 3:1).

For a long time our planet was divided by a vertical line - on one side the West, on the other the East. The cold war scared us. We also saw a horizontal line that divided the rich Northern countries from the poor Southern ones. These two lines came together in the form of a cross over our planet. They symbolised the suffering of the people.

A time of human suffering can be a time of pain, agony, confusion and even despair, but more often than not it is also a time of expectation, a time of hope. Today

powerful forces have decreed the end of the political lines separating East and West and have assured us that the market economy will eradicate all other dividing lines. "Globalisation" is presented as the answer to our expectation, the source of hope.

The reality is that people at the local level all over the world are feeling more and more the invisible forces that divide us. They see a particular way of life invading their daily lives, threatening their jobs, making the burden of their work heavier, especially for women and children. Our time is still a time of decisions, now made visible in the power of silver and gold. From east to west, north to south, the haves and have-nots continue to travel in opposite directions. There is insecurity throughout our lands and the lines of division radiate through the earth like ink on blotting paper.

More than ever we are called in 'just such time' to respond to the voices of those who suffer from the inhuman ways of life imposed on them. At such a time we turn to the Bible to ask what God is saying to our times and through our times. Where is God in all of this? Who has seen or heard or felt God in our times? For such a time as this we turn to God to listen and to heed. In this study we seek to learn from Isaiah 1:2-17 and 1John 1:1-4.

Text and Context

Isaiah 1:2-17. There were times when war was a means of achieving social transformation.

Today we recognise that wars are instruments only of death. The prophet Isaiah portrays the disastrous results of war: "Your country lies desolate, your cities are burned with fire; in your very presence aliens devour your land ..." (1:7). The prophet called his people to turn to God, for they were deserting their faith in the God of life: "Ah, sinful nation..., who have forsaken the Lord, who have despised the Holy one of Israel, who are utterly estranged!" (v.4)

At the time Isaiah 1 was written, eight centuries before the birth of Jesus Christ, the nations east of the Mediterranean and around what we now call the Persian Gulf were living through a period of crisis and war. Empires and kingdoms were in the throes of change, and war was the instrument of this change. It was a time of anxiety and transition. In 742 B.C., Assyria invaded Israel. The rulers of Judah, just to the south, became nervous and began to look for allies to protect them against Assyria. Isaiah prophesies this impending threat and explains the reason for it (vv.4-6). He saw this search for political alliances as further evidence of the people's lack of faith in Yahweh and their myopia concerning God's purposes.

Isaiah 1:2-17 shows us God, with a woman's diligence, setting about the work of retrieving God's people. Through the prophets, God seeks to turn the people from evil (v.18). What God asks is repentance, not debilitating self-pity nor ostentatious worship nor

impressive statements in which we try to assert and establish that we are a people without acknowledging our guilt and alienation from God.

Formal worship is due to God as an expression of our reverence for God, but it cannot supersede or replace our human relations. In fact, it is nullified and becomes positively irksome to God if we make it a substitute for doing justice and helping the oppressed (vv.10-17). The message of the prophet was that the political and social crisis were the result of religious disloyalty, social injustice, greed, corruption and attachment to material things. The people's self-indulgence and pride have so clouded their vision that they can no longer discern God's presence and activity. Isaiah pours condemnation on the visionless and corrupt leaders, the perpetrators of injustice. The prophet's message echoes the meaning of his own name - "Yaweh will deliver; Yahweh is salvation". God's main concern, declares the prophet, is that human beings should resemble the source of their being. They should imitate God. Like Amos (5:1-24), Hosea (6:6; 8: 11-14), Micah (6:6-8) and Jeremiah (7:22-23), Isaiah portrays God as compassionate, full of goodness, truth and justice.

I John 1:1-10. The three letters of 1 John, 2 John and 3 John address conflict within the church. During the initial period of the Christian church when these letters were written, theology was in a very fluid stage, and doctrine was being forged through the many conflicts and controversies that rocked the churches.

We can see the internal

doctrinal crisis very clearly in the first letter of John (ch.2). The main issues in 1 John arise out of differing opinions about living in fellowship and love with one another (2:9-11) and about the humanity of Jesus (4:2-3). The affirmation of Christ's incarnation (4:2) shows us the tangibility of God's presence in the world. We must read this verse alongside 3:16ff., where we are invited to accept our common ethical responsibility towards others and relate words and actions in a meaningful way.

The imagery of light and darkness used in 1:5-7 has become problematic because it has been read with racial connotations to suggest somehow that to have a dark skin is to be evil and a light skin means goodness. It goes without saying that nothing could be further from the truth. Sin befriends all human beings, not just those of one race or gender.

Knowing to fear and to avoid evil, rather than what is dark, is a human responsibility that falls on everyone. This letter, however, was written within a culture that made the opposition of darkness and light represent the antagonism between truth and falsehood, evil and goodness. Surely it is not beyond our imagination to find other language in our times to distinguish between what is in tune with the nature of God and what is not.

The letter of 1 John tries to make a clear distinction between what unites us with Christ and what alienates us from Christ (2:3-6). Our religious codes and our prayers must cohere (1:5-8). Failure in this area is what sin is about.

Fellowship, love and truth are three major emphases in the letter (1:3-4). In order to talk about fellowship, the writer uses family language. Through family language the relationship between Jesus and God is established (2:22-24). Being in fellowship is about living in community with others. Community is central to this letter; and to refer to the members of the community the author uses such terms of endearment as "beloved" (2:7), "(my) little children" (2:1; 3:7), "children of God" (3:1; 5:2).

The fellowship mentioned in 1:3, with all its connotations, is the truth, which is not confined to the conventional institutional church but extended to the entire world (3:11-23). The central ethical demand flowing out of this fellowship is 'that we should love one another' (3:11). The sharing of love is the mark of fellowship and the mark of humanity. The humanity leads to the understanding of the humanity of Jesus and the love of God: "those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also" (4:21; cf. 2:9-11; 4:11-12).

Here we find a close connection with the prophetic message (Isaiah 1:16-17) of costly commitment. At the same time, 1 John is a clear invitation to turn to God (1:9-10) as the God of love, faithfulness and forgiveness (4:7-21). The important principle of his union with the Christian community, with Christ and with God is faith and love.

Suggestions for discussion

1. Esther was a messenger of hope in her time and place. Who are the messengers of hope in your time and place?

2. What is your understanding and local experience of "globalisation"?

3. Like the days when the epistle of 1 John was written, our times are not free from conflicts. What conflicts occupy your community and church? What are

the "invisible lines" of division spreading within your community? What practical responses might the community plan in the face of those conflicts.

4. What are the sins which we are not confessing today as churches or as members of a

particular community? How could we 'turn to God' in our present situations? What is the role of our worship in this? How can we relate worship to our daily life? Look at Is. 1: 11-17, as a source of inspiration for your analysis. ❖

CSI Delegation visits the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of South Korea

A CSI delegation with representatives from Kanyakumari, Vellore, Karimnagar, Coimbatore, Karnataka, Nandyal, South Kerala and Madras dioceses along with Rev. Dr. B.S. Devamani and Mrs. Ahalya Williams, visited the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of South Korea in a South-South Ecumenical Relations Exchange Programme from May 29 to June 11, 1998.

The Republic of Korea has 46 million people with 75% living in urban areas and South Korea is very industrialised and Seoul Americanised. English is rarely spoken. The CSI representatives shared in several ways our vision

and mission as a United Church and Uniting Church, Indian spirituality the concept and practice of meditation in silence and other worship forms were deeply appreciated by the Churches and the Church groups.

Koreans are in fact surrounded by Buddhism and its worshipping congregations. Christians and Buddhists constitute more or less an equal percentage of 30% each in the total population, and the remaining are Confucians, atheists and other groups.

Women's ordination, Ministry and women's liberative issues surfaced in all discussions especially at official meetings with officers of the Presbyterian Church. Equal participation of women in the decision making

bodies and leadership role of women in the Church's mission and ministry are a constant struggle even in the Korean Churches as much as it is in the Churches in India. But a progress towards achieving their goal of participation in large percentage is encouraging year after year.

The delegation returned to India on June 11th, glorifying God with a fresh understanding of the Church in Korea, their commitment to evangelism, its stewardship enthusiasm in practice and its continuous determination to move forward in spreading the Gospel to the ends of the earth, as it is sending missionaries in hundreds and thousands every year by way of short term and long term basis all over the world.

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POKHRAN II - A Matter of National Pride or Concern ?

Bishop Sam Amirtham (Retd.)

Since the explosive events of 1998 May 11 and 13 in Pokhran, an unknown and forgotten village in the deserts of Rajasthan, has become a familiar name to most of the Indians. In fact, the village can claim even international importance. The bombs that exploded, not only unleashed huge nuclear power, but also enormous emotional energy of national pride and euphoria, a sense of having a new 'Shakthi', some even wanting to build a 'Shakthi Peeth', a temple for the all powerful diety. The rejoicing was visible in the streets, in TV screens and in most of the news papers. The coolness with which the Prime Minister Vajpai announced it was in great contrast to the explosive enthusiasm.

The event was unexpected news, to Indians and even to the American Intelligence. The scientists who achieved this success were congratulated. There was all over a sense of satisfaction that our scientists are in no way behind those of other nations in nuclear technology.

It is significant that there were initially very little negative reaction to the event. In fact, when disagreement or questioning on this slowly began to appear they were condemned as lack of nationalism and patriotism. Specifically, 'the intellectuals' were accused of living in rational isolated citadels being ignorant of military realities and the urgent security needs of the country.

It took some time before the issue could be discussed in open forms, NGO circles, in Doordarshan programmes and in the national dailies.

'Why tests at all', and 'why now', were defended passionately by the BJP leaders. The opposition parties accused that this was done for political gains. The government repeatedly said that this was done purely for security reasons.

The international community responded with the threat of sanctions and a sense of moral indignation that India went ahead, ignoring world opinion. The persuasion of President Clinton did not stop Pakistan repeating the same.

I was wondering how the Indian Churches would react. People's Reporter of June 1-15 discussed this issue. The NCCI has expressed concern over tests. 'This would escalate the arms race in the sub-continent', it said. The statement, added 'it seems to smack of hegemonic tendencies towards our neighbouring nations'. Dr. Ninan Koshy in a symposium said that India has lost its moral authority having professed and practiced 'ahimsa'. Dr. Konrad Raiser the Secretary of WCC in a statement said that the tests are cause for profound concern and sadness. "India has tarnished its image as a wise and considered voice of reason in international affairs. It has turned a deaf ear to its our best counsel, relying on weapons of mass and indiscriminate destruction to assert power, rather than on the sophisticated art of statecraft to manifest its wisdom", he said in a letter to the Prime Minister. The CSI-CNI Mar Thoma Church leaders have also come out with a strong statement on India going nuclear.

The news was received in my village and by my friends with shock and shame. Shock, that our government started nuclear arms

race in the sub-continent without

any national discussion, and that the government is going to lead us into the next century with war-fever and war-fear. Also that this was against the position that India held for a long time that nuclear power would be used only for peaceful purposes. It was an abrupt deviation from a general understanding people had. It was a loss of face before International friends and groups with whom one had discussed such issues and had argued that India would never go nuclear.

Informal discussions were held with some young people, village christians and some retired friends of various faiths. Arguments for and against were very strong. One argument, in favour of the test came from a student, interested in international affairs. He said, "the nuclear tests have undermined the arrogant exclusivism of the present nuclear powers". Interestingly he added that in this matter India and Pakistan should stand together against the nuclear club! Is it a victory for the developing world? Another asked, "Why should we be left behind in the nuclear revolution, as we were left behind in the industrial and technological revolution"? Nuclear capability - the language of power - is the only language that the Powers of this world understand.

A retired teacher asked, should we show our strength, by nuclear power or moral power. Most

participants said the real issue is that of national priorities, to bring those under poverty line (now Rs. 20,000 per year), we should explode "development bombs" and spend all our resources for increasing the quality of life for all. Some defended the government's position saying that in spite of the nuclear tests, the budget has not provided more than the general increase of 14% in the new defence budget. It was said by the government that, conventional war force is to be reduced by 50,000 military personnel though the savings would go to modernise the defence system.

While no war, even conventional war can be justified, (the concept of just war is no more held valid) most nations have a preparedness for self defence. Wars are fought by military, and civilian casualties are kept to the minimum. Bombs and their destruction is limited locally. with nuclear war we are confronted with destruction of hundred fold power, large areas devastated and human beings and all life instantly burnt out, radiation maiming thousands for the rest of their life. An ordinary nuclear bomb can destroy about 30 sq. km. of area. While some of the Western Countries for their citizens have built under ground nuclear shelter, this is fact, may not be of use as there will be few survivors after a nuclear war. Chemical and biological wars also fall into this category. Whole peoples can be exterminated; and genocide completed. And this is why all sane people should protest against nuclear weapons, their production and use. Already the Super Powers have nuclear arsenal to destroy the whole earthy 200 times over, we are told here is a cause to struggle against on war footing.

A young woman brought some facts, to the discussion taken from DATA (April - May 1998), and said that the money spent on the nuclear tests would have pulled 30 million persons above the poverty line. She read "India is reportedly considering an expenditure of 4.5 billion on the purchase of modern jet fighters, submarines, aircraft carriers, attack helicopters, air defence systems, and many other weapons. If this is true, this amount can finance Primary education for a year for all the 45 million children who are denied such education and safe drinking water for one year, for all the 226 million people who have no access to such a facility, and essential medicines for a year to all the 135 million people who have no access to any health facility, and family planning services for a year to an additional 22 million couples.

The above mentioned article dealing with the human cost of arms purchases, concluded. "It will be an interesting experiment if people were offered a free choice on a national referendum on whether they would feel more secure with the proposed purchase of arms, or alternatively, with the supply of basic social services".

We looked in to the Bible one particular passage in Isaiah, what the word of God has to say on war. The prophet gives his vision of a peaceful society in 2: 3-4.

"Come, let us climb on to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways and we may walk in his paths. For instruction issues from Zion, and out of Jerusalem comes the word of the Lord; He will be judge between

nations, arbiter among many peoples" (NEB). 'They shall beat their swords into plough shares and their spears into pruning-hooks, nations shall not lift sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more' (AV).

This vision sees a pilgrimage of peoples to Jerusalem, the City of Peace, to receive God's instruction and God's word. All

people moving towards seeking and obeying the will of God. It also says that God will judge the nations and peoples - not just individuals here, but nations India, Pakistan, China and US etc. are held accountable to God. Peace keeping and peace making might be one of the criteria too, for God's judgement (Vs: 4).

Some readers may know that the verse "They shall beat their swords in to plough shares is inscribed in the portals of UN Head Quarters in New York, at a time, when longing for global peace was intense, after World War II. Isaiah's vision surely has a global relevance.

Peace is God's promise and gift. So, it becomes for us a task and a commitment to realise peace in the world.

'Peace is development', 'Peace with justice', The tree of justice has fruits of Peace' are some of the recent concepts in ecumenical Christian thought. People all over the world are being conscientised about the urgent need of desirability of peace and development. The transformation of weapons of war and destruction into implements for agriculture production, and tools for satisfying the basic needs of the poor and the impoverished, is the message of this passage.

Christians are called upon to be instruments of God's peace. Peace makers will inherit the earth. (Mt. 5.)

That the precious national resources, as well as international aid and trade should be spent for peace and development is an increasing concern for those who care for the planet earth and its

people, and future generations.

Some cynics may say that war and threats of war, will always be with us and peace is an impossibility in real politics. But as believers, we are called to hold on to the hope of peace and struggle for peace.

Isaiah envisions a society

marked by the absence of learning warfare and training for military exercises. May that day come soon, we pray, when not only the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, but also the ban of nuclear testing are accomplished. In that future, all military academies will be closed down for ever. Oh, that all God's people would catch this vision! ❖

Medak Diocese

EASTER CELEBRATION JATHRAS :

The annual jathras in various rural regions started with the famous Luxettipet Regional Jathra on Easter Monday. The two day celebrations for the four Pastorates of the region went on with hundreds of people from all the villages. For the participants it was a time of pilgrimage, thanksgiving and spiritual renewal. They came in bullock carts; cooked their own food at the church compound and attended public meeting, worship services and took part in Holy Communion. Number of new believers and children were baptised. The Rt. Rev. Dr. B. P.

Sugandhar, Bishop in Medak preached the word of God and confirmed many youth. Rev. K. James Christopher, Vice Chairman and Rev. K.J. Joseph, Diocesan treasurer were the other speakers.



EDUCATION MINISTRY:

Under the able leadership of our Bishop, Rt. Rev. Dr. B.P. Sugandhar, the Diocese of Medak has entered into a new era in the educational field. Besides the opening of CSI Institute of Technology, the diocese is now proud to have MBA and MCA

NEWS FROM DIOCESES

courses in our colleges.

NEW DIOCESAN OFFICE :

The long cherished desire to have an exclusive office block has been achieved this year with a conferene hall and cabins for the officers. We were privileged to have our Moderator, the Most Rev. William Moses to dedicate the Bishop's Chamber, Committee room, library and guest rooms.

GLOBAL MARCH AGAINST CHILD LABOUR

The Diocese organised a march with school children, staff and parents to join the global march. A huge float made for the purpose carried the participants to join the main march at Vijayawada and went upto Bangalore. It was flagged off by Mr. Gandhi, MLA (Chittoor Constituency) in the presence of our Bishop and the Officers of the Diocese.

Good Practice

A couple called a friend and sang 'Happy Birthday' into the telephone. When they had finished their off-key rendition they discovered they had the wrong number! 'Don't let it bother you,' said the stranger. 'You folks can sure use the practice.'

What a Fuss!

Johnny, aged five, was told by his mother that he must finish his breakfast porridge. He said he didn't want to.

His mother replied, 'You must finish it. If you don't God will be very angry.' She went into the kitchen to wash up, leaving Johnny looking with a sullen

determination at the porridge. Outside it was raining, and suddenly there was a heavy roll of thunder. Johnny's mother came back into the room and found him eating his porridge as quickly as he could, and meanwhile muttering to himself, 'All that fuss for a small plate of porridge!'

His life and message : Integrity and Simplicity

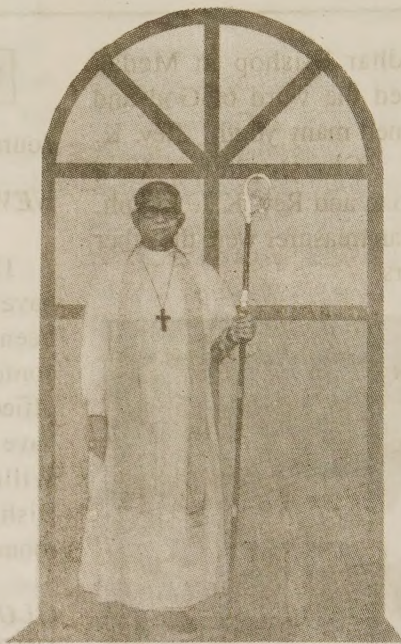
The Late Bishop B.G. Prasada Rao was the only son of late Mr. & Mrs. Bollam Thomas - the second child among five. Born on 29th December 1916 in Karimnagar, the late Bishop B.G. Prasada Rao's life spanned eight decades of rich experiences and unshakable faith which enabled him to serve the Lord through the church and other ministries.

After passing out from Wesley Boy's High School, he took his Bachelor of Divinity degree from the United Theological College, Bangalore (1941-45) and spent one year studying the New Testament for M.Th. in the same college. He later spent a period of intensive training in pastoral work in far away rural areas before he was ordained as a Presbyter in 1948. He then served in various rural, semi-urban and industrial areas through out the length and breadth of the then Telengana.

Besides being steeped in pastoral duties, he served as principal, Men' Training School, Medak and was the Chariman, Medak District Church Council. He was the Superintendent of Wesley Boy's Hostel, Secunderabad and was attached to Wesley Pastorate, Secunderabad (1961-1969). He was the Chairman of Hyderabad and Secunderabad District Church Council and Presbyter-in-charge

of Bollaram and Trimulgherry pastorates.

As the Secretary, Bible Society of India, AP Auxiliary (1969-1976), he carried God's word to the most remote corners of AP. During this period, his work



spanned across the various church denominations. These years, along with his early pastoral work in rural areas were his most rewarding ones.

He reached the peak of his career when he was consecrated as Bishop in Medak in 1976, a position he held with great integrity and simplicity - characteristic of his life style. He was the first "son of the soil" to hold this position. he retired from active service as Bishop in 1981.

Late Bishop B.G. Prasada Rao travelled extensively in India and abroad, always growing rich in spiritual experience. He took

practical training in England, spent a term at St. Andrews Salley Oak College, Birmingham (July-Sep 1959), did his Diploma in Ecumenics at the Ecumenical Institute, Bossey, Switzerland (Oct. 1959 - Feb 1960) and one semester at Industrial Mission, Luton, England.

He held many important and responsible positions at Diocesan, Synod and Ecumenical levels and represented CSI at Consultations organised by Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches held at Ecumenical Institute, Bossey, Switzerland in 1967.

In spite of his travels abroad, he remained committed to the rural grassroots and led a spartan life which indeed was a fitting witness to Christ's life and His teachings.

He did not retire in the literal sense of the word. He continued to spread Christ's message through Dr. Haqq's All India Institute of Evangelism and Good News Festivals in India till God called him to glory on the 24th of June 1998.

Truly, his last words, "I am going to my Lord" reveal his total preparedness and deep faith in God.










He leaves behind his wife, Mrs. Hemalatha, three daughters and one son and their families.

His legacy is Faith and his lesson Simplicity, His weapons Courage and Integrity, Now he belongs to the Lord. ❖

Introducing Computer Services to Christian Organisations

At a recent Christian leadership workshop held at Hyderabad, it was found that many Christian organisations in India lack in-house expertise in the area of information technology. To multiply the effectiveness of Christian work in India, *Olive Advanced Technology Services, Hyderabad*, in partnership with *Mission Aviation Fellowship, USA*, is introducing computer services on a membership basis.

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